

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 179701

LIMDIS FOR UNDER SECRETARY NEWSOM

FOLLOWING REPEAT MOGADISCIO 1591 SENT ACTION SECSTATE,
LUXEMBOURG INFO ADDIS ABABA, CAIRO, DJIBOUTI, BONN, JIDDA,
NAIROBI, DAR ES SALAAM 14 JUL 78

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 1591

LIMDIS

LUXEMBOURG FOR ASST SEC MOOSE

DAR ES SALAAM FOR GORDON BEYER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, MASS, SO, US

SUBJ: SIAD'S SIGNALS: WANTED--A TIMELY SECURITY GESTURE FROM THE
USG

REF: STATE 175801

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT SIAD WAS ATTEMPTING TO CONVEY TO THE
WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR EXACTLY THE SAME MESSAGE THE SOMALI LEADER
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AND HIS LIEUTENANTS HAVE BEEN CONVEYING TO US DURING THE CODEL
LEGGETT AND BEYER VISITS, AND VIA THE VICE MINISTER OF DEFENCE
TO THE CHARGE. SIAD IS SAYING THAT TIME IS RUNNING OUT. THE
DECISION TO BREAK WITH THE SOVIETS HAS BROUGHT DISAPPOINTING RESULTS
FROM THE WEST AND FURTHER CONCESSIONS ARE NOT POSSIBLE. HE IS
ALSO APPEARING FOR SOME CONCRETE SIGNS OF SUPPORT OTHER THAN
ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

2. SIAD IS A CONSUMMATE ACTOR AS WELL AS A WILEY POLITICIAN. WHETHER HE REALLY BELIEVES THAT WASHINGTON IS INTERESTED IN HIS REMOVAL FROM OFFICE OR RAISED THE CHARGE TO DRAMATIZE HIS PLIGHT IS MOOT. WE SUSPECT HE TOLD THE GERMAN IN THE FULL KNOWLEDGE THAT IT WOULD EVENTUALLY REACH US EARS. IN THE SAME CONTEXT, WE WERE SURPRISED TO HEAR HIM TELL CODEL LEGGETT ON THE 7TH THAT HE WAS MORE CONCERNED ABOUT EVENTS IN SOMALIA THAN OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY. HE HAS NEVER PERSONALIZED THE PERCEIVED THREAT TO HIS OWN POSITION SO BLUNTLY BEFORE. WE BELIEVE HE IS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS OFFICER CORPS, AND THE MEAGER ACHIEVEMENTS HE HAS ENJOYED TO DATE IN HIS ATTEMPT TO REBUILD THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY FOLLOWING ITS DEFEAT IN THE OGADEN. WE BELIEVE HE NEEDS AT LEAST SOME TANGIBLE EVIDENCE TO MOLLIFY HIS CRITICS. WE THINK THAT IS THE UNDERLYING RATIONALE FOR HIS PEREGRINATIONS ABOUT WESTERN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST. WE BELIEVE IT ALSO EXPLAINS THE GSDR STEPS IN OPENING THE DOORS AT LEAST PARTIALLY TO ITS ZEALOUSLY GUARDED MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND TO INVITING US NAVAL SHIPS TO VISIT SOMALI PORTS.

3. THE EMBASSY CANNOT PRECISELY EVALUATE THE THREAT TO SIAD'S LEADERSHIP FROM DISSIDENT ELEMENTS WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE COUNTRY. VICE MINISTER OF DEFENCE OMAR HAJI EXPRESSED OBLIQUELY SOME CONCERN ABOUT THESE MATTERS IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE CHARGE ON JULY 12 (SEPTEL). SIAD MADE HIS CONCERNS EXPLICIT TO NEWLY ARRIVED SAUDI AMBASSADOR TAHA ALDEGHATHER IN THEIR INITIAL MEETINGS. WE CONFIDENTIAL

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BELIEVE THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER COUP ATTEMPT, BUT CANNOT SAY THAT IS A PROBABILITY. IF SIAD IS FORCED TO HUMILIATE HIMSELF IN THE EYES OF THE OFFICER CORPS BY RENEWED DECLARATIONS OF PACIFIC INTENT, OR TOLERATE NEW ETHIOPIAN AIR OR GROUND RETAILATORY ACTIONS AGAINST THE GSDR, WE BELIEVE STABILITY IN THE GSDR WILL SUFFER. THERE ARE OTHER STEPS SIAD COULD TAKE SUCH AS RESTORING A BETTER CLAN BALANCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND PARTY, BUT HE MAY FEEL SUCH A MOVE NOW COULD BE INTERPRETED AS SIGN OF WEAKNESS, AND BE RELUCTANT TO DO SO UNTIL HE FEELS HIMSELF STRONGER.

4. IN THEORY ANY SUCCESSOR TO SIAD COULD MOVE TOWARD THE CENTER OR THE RIGHT. IN PRACTICE WE BELIEVE A SUCCESSOR WOULD BE A CABAL OF YOUNG OFFICERS WHO WOULD MOVE TOWARD THE RADICAL LEFT. MOREOVER, THEY WOULD BE UNSCHOOLED IN STATECRAFT, AND MORE NATIONALIST, WE SUSPECT, THAN THE PRESENT GSDR. WE CANNOT SEE MUCH GAIN FOR THE WEST IN THAT SITUATION. IN SHORT, WE THINK IT BETTER TO DEAL WITH SIAD, WARTS AND ALL, THAN TO IGNORE HIS PLEAS AND WAIT AND SEE HOW LONG OR IF HE CAN SURVIVE. THAT CONCLUSION WAS THE BASIS FOR OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT WE SCHEDULE AN IMMEDIATE NAVAL VISIT. WE THOUGHT THAT WAS A REASONABLY SMALL BUT POSITIVE STEP IN DEMONSTRATING TO SIAD AND HIS PEOPLE--MANY OF WHOM ARE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT TIES WITH THE US REGARDLESS OF THEIR FEELINGS

ABOUT SIAD HIMSELF--THAT THE US DOES HAVE A CONCERN FOR THE
SOMALI STATE AND ITS SECURITY.
VOUGHT

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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